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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 24, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures prevailed during November 17 through 23. Temperatures averaged four to seven degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with a few southern Peninsula areas recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s, and 60s with at least one low in the 20s recorded across the Panhandle and northern Peninsula, and at least one low in the 30s recorded by some central Peninsula localities. Rainfall ranged from traces to over an inch. Most localities recorded less than a half inch of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate in all areas with a few pockets of very short to short supplies where the recent rains missed. Soil moisture remains surplus in areas receiving the brunt of recent rains. Drier conditions allowed some drying of peanut and cotton fields in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. However, some acreage remains too wet to harvest with producers reporting abandonment of some fields. Peanut harvesting is 98 percent finished compared with 100 percent for acreage dug by this date last year and for the five-year average harvest progress. The recent rain boosted growth of small grains planted this fall. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	3	13	1	3	10
Short	9	25	22	19	22	16
Adequate	80	62	63	70	70	64
Surplus	10	10	2	10	5	10

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear weather allowed field work to progress on schedule. Producers are harvesting to meet the holiday demand. Vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes and very light supplies of parsley, strawberries and watermelons. Strawberry growers welcomed the cooler temperatures which aid fruit maturation. Recent heavy rains damaged some tomatoes with reduced yield expected.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, generally cool temperatures, with isolated frost, reduced the quality of annual summer pasture. Small grain pasture growth is late in developing in some locations because they were planted late. In the north, cool season forages are doing well, due to adequate and timely rainfall. In the central counties, pasture and cattle are in fair to good condition. In the southern area, the condition of pasture and cattle is good. Statewide, the cattle condition is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	40	50	25	35
Good	50	40	75	60
Excellent	5	5	0	5

CITRUS: Many areas in Florida's citrus belt dried out this week following last weekend's drenching downpours. The lower interior and west coast were the wettest. This week was generally dry and cool, with cold temperatures on Friday and Saturday nights. There was no frost in the citrus growing counties. Fewer hours of daylight and cool night time temperatures are greatly reducing tree growth. Groves, trees and new crop fruit are all in very good to excellent condition. There is some splitting of fruit on the heavier soils that have had a lot of rain since September. Harvesting crews are very active picking crops for both fresh and process use. All of the processors are open and taking both field run fruit and packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are busy mowing, chopping, discing and generally clean cultivating cover crops for the winter season. Herbicides are still being applied to some young trees and resets. Some of the late season fresh crops are still being sprayed. Heaters have been fueled and placed in a few cold pockets in northern groves.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 10	Nov 17	Nov 24
Navel oranges	261,000	172,000	229,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	3,126,000	3,980,000	6,002,000
All grapefruit	856,000	542,000	713,000
Tangerines	312,000	208,000	230,000
Tangelos	39,000	76,000	74,000

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.